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CONTENTS

Concerto In Swing	FRANCIS L. KINNEY '43	3
Third Balcony	G. RICHARD SCHREIBER '44	7
Aurora Borealis—Northern Lights	STEVEN D. THEODOSIS '42	14
Is Religion For A Sissy?	JAMES BOGAN '44	18
My Brother And I	JOHN H. FORD '44	22
Thoughts In Autumn	JOHN GOETZ '45	30
National Defense And Diamonds	RICHARD ARTHUR '43	32
I Went Through The Pen	THOMAS SCHEIBER '45	35
Editorial:		
Jimmy—Light Shed On a Mystery	STEVEN D. THEODOSIS '42	39
Book Reviews:		
<i>Christopher Columbus</i>	CLIFFORD RIEDE '45	42
<i>Verses From The River Country</i>	JAMES W. CHANNELL '45	43
<i>France My Country</i>	CHARLES SUDROVICH '44	43
<i>France On Berlin Time</i>	FRANCIS L. KINNEY '43	44
Exchanges	FRANCIS L. KINNEY '43	46

Concerto In Swing

FRANCIS L. KINNEY

One could, of course, regard this article as the usual bit of mill work, written on the provocation of the moment, something rather timely and pertinent. But—that would be to lose all opportunity to unfold before us the grandeur and magnificence of sweeping chords and the heart-catching of a simple melody. Here is the reader's chance to drink deep of beauty.

"Good evening everyone. This is Freddy Martin and his orchestra coming to you from the Hall of Mirrors in the Hotel Netherland Plaza, Cincinnati. Opening our program we hear an old favorite which has been recently revised in modern design, Concerto in B flat minor by Peter Tschaikovsky."

In such a simple manner this great work was introduced to the millions of ardent "swing" fans who, if the work had been announced as coming from Carnegie Hall, would have immediately whisked their dials to other stations. However, the fact remains that the primary theme from Tschaikowsky's first piano concerto will now be buffeted around by all the popular dance orchestras till it either reaches the stellar place on "Your Hit Parade" or sinks into oblivion without having attained that record. Of course, it is the hauntingly lingering quality of this melody which has warranted its being even considered for popular presentation. This has been the case in each of the "steals" from Tschaikowsky. Everyone now knows that "Moon Love" is from the Fifth Symphony, that "Our Love" is from the Romeo and Juliet Overture, and that "Isle of May" is the andante cantabile of the D Major string quartet.

Even torn from their exquisite background these immortal themes survived and were included in the repertoire of every orchestra from the beer garden quartet to the great dance bands of our large hotels. The effect, good or bad, on the original composition is not the subject of this treatise. I merely make these observations to show that the general public is, by this time "Tschaikowsky-conscious" and that a serious approach to his first piano concerto is not out of place. Furthermore, since Tschaikowsky's works enjoy this popularity why should we not capitalize upon this and acquaint the laymen with the original work? Once this has been done, Tschaikowsky will speak for himself.

The historical background of this opus reads as fiction, so lucidly does it reveal the artistic temperament of the character involved—the tradi-

tional temperamental musician. In tribute to his friend, the pianist, Nicholas Rubinstein, Tschaikowsky had long desired to write a piano Concerto. Work on the original score was begun in 1874 and finished early in 1875 with a dedication to Rubinstein. Much to Tschaikowsky's displeasure, his pianist friend proceeded to find fault with the composition as a whole, declaring that Tschaikowsky should have consulted him about the piano part since it was not pianistic and the solo passages were not to his liking.

Formerly Rubinstein had been a fervid champion of Tschaikowsky's music. The Russian composer, greatly angered by this criticism, vehemently stated that not one note of the score would be changed. He then sent the Concerto to Hans von Bulow, having changed the dedication from Rubinstein to him. This pianist found great delight in the composition and first performed it on his American tour for which he was then preparing. So the Concerto was first publicly performed in Boston. Immediately recognized as another masterpiece, Tschaikowsky received great praise from American critics. This news reached Rubinstein, who reversed his first impression and acclaimed the new Concerto. He also became the chief exponent of the bristling solo passages and taught the work to many of his famous pupils. Likewise, Tschaikowsky himself must have relented, for a completely new edition appeared in 1889 despite his first refusal to alter a note. The "duel between piano and orchestra" is the result of this revision.

In itself, the music follows the regular concerto form of three movements. The first theme is brought forth by the orchestra against the crashing chords of the piano. It is like a bursting bomb-shell which unfolds itself to display grandeur and intensity. As if to dispel our awe, a section bubbling with humor and laughter is treated by the piano with orchestral accompaniment. This subsides and, with quiet rumblings in the bass of the piano, the second main theme is introduced. Ah, here is a new plane of understanding! Herein is expressed the hope and deliciousness of life though it be interspersed with frequent misgivings and somberness. This is developed; it concludes with a highly emotional passage in octaves only to resolve into the second theme again. The remainder of this first movement is a conflict between two forces, the one, hopeful and satisfied, the other, distraught and ravaging.

The second movement is a fantasy of imagery. First, the softly plucked strings accompany a piano that is subdued and rested. Then, out of sheer nothingness, chromatics are flung about like swift darts of new thrills and interest. After having been revived, the music plunges forward as if the time that had been lost during inactivity must be recovered, as if only the accomplishment of greater things will suffice to satisfy. Following this outburst there is a return to the simplicity of the original theme by the orchestra accompanied by soft delicate trills of the piano. Thus this movement ends.

Like a gorgeous display of fireworks is the concluding movement. So exhilarating and beautiful it is that we forget its surging impulsiveness and are carried along with its vitality. The thematic material is not lacking in excitement, for at once we sense the dramatic questioning quality of the piano. This question is answered by the secondary theme, which is filled with warmth and sympathy. Upon this reassurance Tschaikowsky builds and leaves his listeners a final word of encouragement. All has been said; the Concerto ends with flashes of power, majesty, and brilliance. The piano and orchestra having been reconciled, combine to produce inexpressive wonders. As Von Bulow says, "It is perfect and mature in form, and full of style—in the sense that the intentions and craftsmanship are everywhere concealed."

As a whole, the Concerto is Tschaikowsky at his best. To those who are acquainted with his fourth, fifth, and sixth symphonies it is essentially enjoyable since the moods in the Concerto are reminiscent of them. The long orchestral interlude of the first movement has material almost identical to that found in the last movement of the Fourth Symphony. In comparison with the second piano Concerto in G major, it completely overshadows it. The second Concerto is a sound piece of workmanship, more conventional in form than its predecessor but not to be compared with it as regards the interest of its thematic material, or those qualities of warmth and pulsing vitality which carry us away in the B flat minor Concerto.

Biographies of Tschaikowsky do not reveal his own reaction to this piece, but we do find a critical statement regarding his works in these words: "I have always suffered from my inability to round and polish the form of my works. Only after strenuous labor have I at last succeeded in making the form of my compositions correspond more or less with their content. In earlier days I was too careless and gave too little attention to the critical re-examination of my sketches. Consequently my seams always showed, and there was no organic union between the separate episodes. But the form of my works will never be exemplary, for the essential qualities of my musical nature can be improved but never altered."

An interpretation of the Concerto is done proficiently only by artists, for the soloist's part is one of great technical difficulty and includes much that is sheer virtuosity. Even the popular "version" omits the difficult but thrilling cadenzas of the first movement. Many consider it a splendid study in octaves and chords for the pianist, since beauty is not sacrificed to show off the pianist's technique.

It is impossible to say how long this work will have the outstanding popularity that is evidenced for it today. But it is certain that as long as we seek beauty, Tschaikowsky's Concerto will be heard. A poised baton . . . a moment filled with silence . . . and in a crash of chords, another audience listens as throughout the country numberless thousands

are listening to the B flat Concerto with the same enthusiasm, the same silent worship. For it is the music of the soul, of the emotion—the music of intensity and catharsis.

Third Balcony

G. R. SCHREIBER

"Pity," says E. A. Robinson, is "not the least of time's offending benefits." Whether, on reading this story, you will not suffer this emotion according to the largeness of the Greeks, or not, makes little difference. Pity you will have, we are sure, and a deeper insight into the heart of man.

"May I?" he asked.

"Of course you may," I said. The man smiled warmly as he stepped in under the wide, black brim of my dripping umbrella.

"Thanks a lot," he said. "It's a hellish night, isn't it?" Then he cupped his hands, thin and white around his mouth, and blew into them vigorously to warm them.

It was a nasty night. Rain slanted down in a slow sheet of mist, came pouring off the roofs, or down the rainspouts and hurried across the sidewalk to the gutter. Even an umbrella didn't do much good. It would have been most depressing had it not been for the bright lights and flashing colors of a theatre marquee overhead.

Sheldon theatre is an old place, massive-built of cold, damp grey-stone, forbidding in the daytime and little better at dark. Facing Fourth Avenue, the theatre presents a rather grand appearance. Its gian marquee reaches out to the street with myriad lights, and two tall, green, potted ferns suspend in midair. Long, shiny, black-enameled cars purr in to stop before the Fourth Avenue entrance. And the patrons there come in stiff starched shirts, with the rustle of silk and the scent of cölogne.

The balcony office is separate from the main entrance to the orchestra level. It is on the side street, a little darker, a little wilder, and so very much more naked than the Fourth Avenue entrance. But the patrons are infinitely interesting: An old, sad-looking lady, in purple, with the smell of lavender; a gushing young school girl, with a serious swain on arm, out to make a night that will be long in memory; a serious man, thin drawn and in need of a shave, with his pressed suit shiny in the hard light; or people of the bourgeois, plain, simple, common folk, who save for two months at a time the \$1.10 for a cardboard ticket to three hours of escape in the world of unreal.

I stood twelfth from the front of the long line that stretched out from a small box marked "Balcony." The lights were on in the box, and the ticket vendor—a rather pasty young girl in a bright red dress with a

few gold spangles—sat there on her chrome chair counting out change from a green canvas sack. She arranged the coins in neat stacks and placed them out along the dull brass counter.

"Woman of Destiny" was scheduled to start at 8:30. It was now 7:20, and time passes so very slowly when you are standing in the rain.

"Do you suppose," I asked the stranger, "that they will open the box office soon?" This night air is just a little too much for my constitution."

"That's hard to say," he answered. "Sometimes they open early; other times it's late. Have you seen the show before?"

"No," I replied, "this is a first night for me. Have you?"

"O yes, I've seen the show . . . let's see now . . . I think it must be four, no, five times. I saw it the day before yesterday. The matinee. Much cheaper, too." He made a wry smile.

He fumbled around in his pocket for a moment, came forth with a decrepit cigaret and proceeded to light it. The flickering match played on his face: He was a slight man, and his features were plainly chiseled. There were little wrinkles all around his eyes, and his face had the expression of a man with boundless patience. His clothes were average—but you would hardly expect anything more than average in a line before the balcony box office.

"You must have enjoyed the performance very much to see it so many times," I ventured.

"It's good," he said. "As good as she always is."

"Carla Marsh, you mean?"

"Yes."

"I've seen her work before," I said. "The first time I remember seeing her was in a walk-on part in something by Shaw."

"She was good in that," the stranger admitted. "It was over at the Palace almost ten years ago now, wasn't it?"

"It must have been all of ten years."

A dumpy lady in front of me pressed forward unexpectedly and a buzz of voices floated back down the line from the box office that had opened for business. We moved with the others and worked our way closer to the girl in the glass cage.

"I'll be almost glad to get in there," the stranger remarked with a nod of his head toward the door. "This rain is no time to stand outside."

"You *should* be glad to get in there," I said. "After all, a man who sees one show five times must have a terrific liking for the stage."

"Do you think so?" he asked.

I did not reply, for the way he smiled at me made it seem that it didn't matter greatly what I thought.

We were so close now that we could smell the mustiness from the



old stone building and hear the usher calling, "Have your tickets ready, please."

A worn dollar bill and a thin dime were wet in my right hand where I had held them for almost thirty minutes. The stranger stepped back and felt in the pockets of his suit. His hand came out and he extracted the necessary amount.

"Thank you, sir" . . . "Thank you, madam," the girl in the ticket office said with dreadful monotony.

I shoved my money in through the small opening, got a better look at the girl in the red dress, and took up the square piece of pink pasteboard

that automatically appeared. I stood back and waited until the stranger had his ticket. The girl said, "Thank you, sir."

After I shook out my umbrella, we entered the narrow entrance, handed our tickets to the waiting boy, and made our way up the stairs toward the third balcony.

Others hurried past us in the hope of obtaining one of the choice seats. But the wise old patrons knew that there just isn't such a thing as a choice seat in third balcony. The steady customers sauntered slowly up the stairs. Some bought programs. I started to, but my companion laid his hand on my arm.

"I bought one some weeks ago," he said. "I have it right here and we can use it tonight. That is, we can unless you want one for a souvenir."

"Thanks," I replied. "If I do want one to keep I can get it after the show."

We passed through another door at the end of the long stairs and stood still a minute so that our eyes could accustom themselves to the sudden change of light. Somewhere, far below, we could hear people talking faintly. And nearby there was the rustle of programs and the sound of many whispered conversations.

We found a seat somewhat in direct line with the stage. We were so close to the ceiling that the stage seemed almost directly below us. As a matter of fact, if you have ever been there you will remember that in third balcony you must lower your chin till it almost touches your breast in order to get a clear view of the scene.

Some time had passed. The orchestra filed in slowly. Theatre orchestras always file in with a sort of studied boredom after a play has been on for several months. A violinist touched his bow lightly to the strings. The piano tattooed out the notes for another that was tuning up.

Gradually the orchestra found their seats. There was no director, but suddenly they began to play. From where we sat it sounded pretty good. But theatre orchestras always sound pretty good in the third balcony.

The expectant hush that is always present before first curtain settled over the house. It is the moment of transition, that lapse in the journey from real to fantasy. It's a powerful moment, like a great, wind-hushed prairie autumn night. When a program rattled now it broke the stillness sharply, and an old man with asthma back in the fifth row center must have felt quite conspicuous.

If you listened closely you could hear the buzzer signal: Curtain. Curtain going up.

The orchestra burst out with renewed momentum and the heavy plush curtains slid apart to reveal the stage setting where a lone figure sat quietly at a massive mahogany desk. The house lights dimmed.

The play was good. There was no doubt of that. Of course, I knew

it must be good long before tonight. All the critics had said so. Even George Nathan wrote admiringly of it, and of Carla Marsh. If Nathan thought a thing was good, that was enough for me.

My companion leaned forward expectantly. The man at the desk said something startling and harsh to a negro servant girl. Then Carla Marsh made her entrance.

There was a burst of applause.

My friend leaned back in his chair, but he did not applaud. I suppose that after seeing the same entrance five times one could hardly be expected to applaud. But from his face I could tell that he did enjoy it. The clapping grew dimmer, died out, and Carla Marsh began to speak.

I have never remembered much about the first act of "Woman of Destiny." For that matter, I have never been able to remember much of the rest of the play except that it was powerful and gripping like a page from true life, and that Carla Marsh was wonderful.

There was little intermission between the first and second acts. We stayed in our seats on his advice. I don't even remember that we said much to each other. There wasn't need for talking. We both felt that.

But at the second-act curtain, we joined the others and made our way to the lobby—a long, narrow place with feeble lighting and a rather heavy atmosphere.

"What do you think?" the stranger asked.

"She's wonderful," I said. "It's the greatest thing I've ever seen her do."

Then he excused himself and went off down the hall where he disappeared through a little door.

The dumpy woman who had stood in front of me in line out front was talking to another woman. I leaned back against the cold wall, tucked my right foot up under, lighted a camel and listened idly.

"She is marvelous, isn't she? She must have the theatre in her very blood to put on a show like that. So real. So very much the character."

Balcony critics are always closest to the real truth I have learned after attending the theatre now for many seasons.

"Do you know, my dear," one of the women was saying, "she has given up so much for this life. So very much, you know. I often wonder whether it's really worth it."

"What do you mean?"

"O, my dear, don't you know she's given up any home life she might have had. And not all because of her fault, either. She was married once, you know . . ."

"She was married?"

"My, yes. Married to an unappreciative little man. He must have

been jealous of her. Terribly jealous. They say he just up and walked out on her one night. Never heard of him again."

"You don't say! What was his name?"

"O, a very commonplace name, John Howard. So different from Carla Marsh, you know. So lacking in distinction. Of course she kept her own name for her work."

"Sorry if I've kept you waiting," my companion said beside me. I relaxed my position from the wall and we walked down the length of the lobby where there was a small bench vacant.

"This play is really going over," I said when we had made ourselves as comfortable as possible. "All the balcony critics are raving about Carla Marsh."

"Yes," he said, "They do every time. But she has to give up a lot for this sort of thing. You can't hardly imagine her married, can you, living a happy life with some fellow?"

"I don't know," I said, not repeating the idle gossip of the two dumpy ladies at the other end of the lobby. "I suppose she could be happily married if she found the right man."

"Perhaps," he mused. "But it's doubtful, I think. You know, the theatre grows on you. Once you're in, there just isn't anything you can do about it. There is just one curtain after another until the last curtain falls; one glittering tinsel set in the spotlights till all the tinsel wears off. Even when it's all gone, the theatre is still in your blood and you can't get away."

"There's a lot of truth in that," I said.

"People like Carla Marsh come up the hard way," he continued. "They begin life in a trunk, and they end it in a trunk. Imagine what life with a girl like that would mean."

I could imagine—and it was pleasant. So I did not answer.

"It's like being married, and then again it's like not being married," he said. "You would never have an evening to call your own. And some days there would be matinees. And there are never mornings for theatrical people. It would be one round of parties and receptions after another. Some critic to receive, the producer entertaining the cast, a rich old fanatic inviting the cast up for midnight dinner. That wouldn't be fun for long."

The warning signal came that the third-act curtain was about to go up. We turned with the rest and returned to our seats.

"So you don't believe Carla Marsh could ever be married happily?" I asked, thinking all the while of what I had heard the two gossips repeating in the lobby some time before.

"I don't think she ever will be," he answered.

Down below, the orchestra played the overture for the final curtain.

Late comers strolled in. The house lights were dimmed. The final act of "Woman of Destiny" began.

Then the play was over the audience was on its thousand feet, cheering, whistling, stamping, clapping the performance. The great, the overwhelming aftermath of drama hung heavily in the air. Reality did not return the moment the heavy curtains crushed down across the stage. It lasted till the applause grew dim, till the musicians down below were putting their instruments in battered cases, till people were filing out and calling goodnights back and forth to one another.

We went back down the steps, making our way cautiously in the bright light that was so different from the darkened twilight of the theatre's interior. We reached the night air and the street and paused there a moment. I lit a cigaret, offered him one. The rain had stopped, but a wind was blowing wildly down the street, carrying littered paper wrappers, and snapping clothes about.

"I feel terribly silly," I said. "But do you know we have spent the biggest part of the evening together and did not even bother to introduce ourselves formally."

Then I told him my name and that I worked in the basement hardware section of Gimbel's department store. He shook the ashes carefully from his cigaret and blew the smoke out tightly.

"I work for Leland's Chemical Company over on the west side," he told me. "My name is John Howard."

We shook hands then and started off in different directions. I walked up under the Fourth Avenue entrance of the Sheldon theatre before something in me heard a voice talking.

"It's like being married, and then, again, it's like not being married. You would never have an evening to call your own. And some days there would be matinees. It would be one round of parties and receptions after another. Some critic to receive, the producer entertaining the cast, a rich old fanatic inviting the cast up for midnight dinner . . . That wouldn't be fun for long."

Then I heard the same voice saying more, like an echo.

"My name is John Howard."

And the voice of the dumpy woman gossip in the lobby came, telling, "O, a very commonplace name, John Howard. So different from Carla Marsh, you know. So lacking in distinction. Of course, she kept her own name for her work."

Then somehow I stopped walking. And I stood still, looking backward through the night air. There was a lone figure already far down the side street. The wind was blowing wildly, carrying littered paper wrappers and snapping clothes about. I wanted to call out after him. But you can never be sure. John Howard is such a common name. And he was not a distinguished man. People in the third balcony never are.

Aurora Borealis — Northern Lights

STEVEN D. THEODOSIS

To know something more of the deep mysteries of the universe has been the ceaseless work of man's tireless mind. Often the truth proved by experiment and fact is elusive and then the imagination must leap to the rescue. Theories, then, about a subject such as this must catch something of the gleam of the theme itself. Read and see.

Covering the whole sky with moving sheets and streamers of transparent light, some of it green and pink, other purplish, the great aurora of September 18, as it will be known historically, provided a most spectacular sky sight to millions of observers, who were struck with awe and admiration. The waves of light seemed to be coming from directly overhead, forming a great corona. The greenish haze intermingled with what seemed to be the reflection in the sky of a titanic wave of wood violets. The lights flashed on and off as though a master electrician were painting the scene with cosmic flood light. Backgrounding the aurora were the stars which seemed even more brilliant than ever in the transparent sky.

From the first observation recorded by literate men, sublime display of the northern lights stirred practical observers to lyrical extacies. They are, say the Eskimo, the dancing soul of the dead.

One of the best descriptions is quoted from a Norse manuscript of the year 1250:

"It appears like a flame of strong fire seen from afar. Pointed shafts of unequal and very variable size dart upwards into the air, so that now the one and now the other is the higher, and the light is floating like a shining blaze. So long as these rays are highest and brightest, this sparkling fire gives so much light that, out of doors, one can find one's way about and even hunt. In houses with windows it is light enough for men to see each other's faces.

But this light is so variable that it sometimes seems to grow obscure, as if a dark smoke or thick fog is breathed on it, and soon the light seems to be stifled in this smoke. As night ends and dawn approaches the light begins to pale, and disappears when day breaks. Some people maintain that this light is a reflection of the fire which surrounds the seas of the north and south. Others say it is the reflection of the sun when it is below the horizon. For my part I think it is produced by the ice which radiates at night the light which it has absorbed by day."

Only within the past two generations have geophysicists provided

a more logical explanation of the aurora borealis. Much still remains unknown. Unlike the light of sun, moon or stars, the luminescence of the top and bottom of the world seems to have substantial source in a hot or reflecting solid body.

The sun is approximately 90,000,000 miles from the earth. Upon its light and heat all life on this planet depends. But between events on the sun and on the earth there is little observable relation. The northern lights, however, respond specifically to specific changes on the sun's surface and may prove of inestimable value in interpreting these changes.

One most unusual group of sunspots traveling over the face of the sun caused H. W. Wells of the Carnegie Institution of Washington to predict, two days in advance, the beautiful display of northern light that glorified the heavens on September 18. The number of sunspots increases and decreases in approximately an eleven-year cycle. One maximum has just passed, and it is probable that another decade will pass before the aurora borealis is seen far to the southward of its normal limits.

Streams of electrically charged particles, possibly electrons and protons, are shot from the flaming surface of the sun. Their velocity is a little less than that of light. These particles are pulled towards the north and south magnetic poles of the earth. They strike the extremely tenuous outer atmosphere, extending as much as 800 miles from the surface of the planet. This is one of the findings of aurora borealis studies.

They collide with atmospheric atoms and molecules, stripping off outer electrons and causing light-producing energy states. The elements present are chiefly nitrogen and oxygen, and the light produced is such as can be duplicated in the laboratory by putting atoms of these elements in the proper conditions of excitation.

Precise nature of the particles shot from the sun—there is no other possible source—remains to be determined. Wherever they collide with atmospheric atoms they produce luminescence. There have been reports of auroras in full sunshine. These cannot be verified and seem quite improbable. The color effects of sunlight falling on cirrus clouds might easily be mistaken for the northern lights.

From night to night the duration of the aurora differs. It may continue all night. The light appears strongest just before dawn. The phenomenon always has been difficult to photograph because of the absolute dimness of the light. The first successful pictures were taken in Lapland in 1892 with exposures of seven or more seconds. Recently natural color photographs have been obtained.

Spectra of the northern lights, reproduced and studied under laboratory conditions, shed some light on the temperature of the earth's atmosphere at great heights. If the air were as dense as at sea level, of course, it would

be very hot, but actually it is somewhere between -30 and -40 degrees centigrade.

The height of the light source can be measured, as can that of any nearby heavenly body, by photographing the phenomenon against a background of stars. This has been done by Stormer and also by the Norwegian geophysicist and Carnegie collaborator, Vegard, and the distance of the aurora above the earth has been found surprisingly small.

Aurora borealis appears in several characteristic forms. Sometimes it is the form of arcs or bands of vari-colored light stretching across the sky. Sometimes there is the appearance of red or violet clouds scattered across the heavens. A form often noted is a white or greenish glow near the horizon, which looks like the first glimmer of dawn. The "drapery aurora" is described by explorers. The northern sky seems to be hung with luminescent curtains. Most spectacular is the so-called "flaming aurora." Strong waves of red or purple light move rapidly upwards, one after another, in the direction of the magnetic zenith. It looks like a rolling side of fire.

Yellowish-green is the dominant color most frequently displayed. The color is due to a single wave length of light—the mysterious green line which puzzled physicists for a generation until, in 1925, Sir John McLennan of the University of Toronto was able to reproduce it in the laboratory. It is given off by atomic oxygen in a peculiar state of excitation. The green line appears only when there are mixed with the oxygen some of the other gases found normally in the atmosphere—argon, neon, helium, or, most important of all, nitrogen.

The significance of this green line is due not alone to its presence in the aurora. It is also the most conspicuous light-line found in the luminescence of the night sky which is present all over the earth and is sometimes called the "non-polar aurora." On a clear night the sky light, exclusive of the moon, is approximately equivalent to that of a 25-candlepower lamp about 300 meters away. Only about a fourth of this is due to the stars. The rest comes from the high atmosphere. From six to ten per cent of the total is due to the green oxygen line alone.

Oxygen bombarded by the corpuscles from the sun also contributes a little of the red light found in auroras. Most of the luminescence, however, comes from ionized nitrogen atoms, especially the blue and purplish shades often reported by observers. Nitrogen remains the chief constituent of the earth's atmosphere, at great heights as well as near the surface.

Actually the northern lights seldom are seen south of the southern boundary of Canada. They can be observed on every clear night within an irregular ellipse around the north magnetic poles, and usually a few hundred miles to the southward. Occasionally they are reported as far south as the latitude of Washington and even—the observations are somewhat questionable—at the equator.

Hardly a fair start has been made on the scientific study of the northern lights. They are of absorbing interest in at least three fields.

The high atmosphere of the earth, far above the stratosphere which is the limit of airplane exploration, remains a region of mystery. The aurora is one of the few observable phenomena—and by far the most striking—which takes place there. If the aurora were thoroughly understood, much light would be thrown on its physical surroundings.

Relationship between the strength of the luminescence and the magnetic field of the earth has often been mentioned. Is this a coincidence? It is generally agreed that there is a physical association. Presumably during a sunspot maximum the surface of the solar body is in an unusually excited state. Larger and more frequent streams of corpuscles than ordinary are shot out into space, and hence a greater effect is produced on the outer atmosphere of the earth. The electrical state of the air is altered, and there are produced both the luminescence and the magnetic phenomena.

All sorts of weird cycles have been linked up with the progress of sunspots from minima to maxima and back again—from the recurrence of wars to the state of the stock markets. Few of these can be definitely proved, or disproved. The northern lights and the magnetic storm cycles are exceptions of which there can be no question. When the nature of this is cleared, there will be a better understanding of magnetic phenomena in general. Studies of the aurora already have given a better understanding of the physical composition of the high atmosphere. They may be expected in the future to prove even more revealing.

There is a common belief that the aurora "sings." Many observers, including some scientists, claim to have heard strange, semi-musical sounds which increase and diminish in intensity with the northern lights themselves. The nature of these sounds, if they actually can be demonstrated as real, remains an unsolved mystery of the Far North. That they are due to the aurora, *per se*, seems impossible.

Occasional odors—probably the pungent smell of ozone from an electrical discharge—also have been reported as accompanying auroral displays.

As truth adds beauty to the essences of many things surrounding us, so much more will we be able to appreciate the grandeur of aurora borealis in the future. Not only will it lend its pleasant scenic touches to the eye, but in it may lie the source of unlimited knowledge, knowledge that will expand man's wisdom in fields now undreamed of, fields that will challenge him even further in the search for truth.

Is Religion For A Sissy?

JAMES BOGAN

Every man admires a slugging, fast stepping fighter. Carry that analogy into the realm of this discussion and you have a cause to study all the solid arguments set before you here. Nothing is pulled, nothing muffed. Squarely, fairly the author proves that religion is for men.

Definitely not! That is my answer to this question.

A national defender in one of our nation's immense army camps was overheard making the remark that religion is for a sissy. I am afraid that this national defender voiced the opinion of a large percentage of people. Innumerable people feel that only the weak, spineless person can attain any semblance of religious thoughts. These people are wrong, for by making this statement, they are contradicting themselves.

The modern definition of the word "sissy" necessitates my qualifying the term as it will be used in this treatise. My "sissy" is one who has not only physical or bodily weakness but moral weakness as well. The reasons for these qualifications are readily understood. Many of us know physical weaklings who are strong morally, and, vice versa; there are others who lack moral strength but who in the physical world are "super-men." My readers must appreciate the fact that a true sissy has no strength.

What is religion? There are many attitudes toward this question today. Many feel that it embodies some emotional sensation; to them, a religious is some ethereal person. Others who practice it do so only because, for some reason, they are forced to. Today, it is not how good and virtuous one can be but rather how far he may transgress. "I must practice religion so that I will avoid the pains of hell." Yes, these, if ruled by a strict conscience, will entitle entrance into heaven. But do these even begin to convey a true meaning of religion?

Religion, an elementary and true one, is giving to God His due. We owe a debt. God must be repaid. Let me make a comparison: if a friend offers you a gift, you do not refuse it. You are very grateful and undoubtedly feel that you owe some debt to the donor. Likewise, God has given us the opportunity to live, to enjoy this world, and to enhance our possibility for life with Him in the hereafter. We, who feel indebted to friends for material gifts, must be *aflame* with the desire to repay our greatest Friend for His supreme gift—an opportunity for life with Him. True religion cannot be forced upon us, nor can it gain momentum because of physical fear. It is an intellectual—religion must be based

on solid reason—desire for compensation. This reimbursement can be effected only by leading a life according to God's desires.

Religion is intellectual! It demands that we use our reason in the search for truth. We need not necessarily be a logician but our mental processes in this search for the Savior must result in properly-drawn conclusions. This use of the intellect demands that we be determined, that we be strong, and that we persevere in a true path of reason. If a true syllogism is the basis of our thought, we are bound to arrive at the truthful aim of our search.

Upon our arrival at the truth, we are bound by our intellect to accept it. We are bound by our reason, which makes us grateful for something received. Surely, it is not easy, nor is it for a sissy, to accept certain parts of a religion that are not perceivable. The Holy Trinity and the Immaculate Conception are not understandable by reason alone. Yet, we must have sufficient mental and physical strength to accept and believe these, for God, the All-knowing, has demanded that we do. This acceptance of the truth requires stamina, for it is not a simple thing to be humble. Humility requires true strength—it is a "snap" to be proud and haughty—it takes "courage" to be humble. One must have strength—virility, manliness and hardness—to meet a situation and be master of it. Determination and will power necessary for humility are not shown by a sissy; a staminal person, by the very fact that he possesses these characteristics, is strong.

Thus, we see that religion is intellectual. If one follows his mind accordingly, he undoubtedly will come to a true knowledge of God. There is no person who truly feels that God does not exist. Some say they think God does not exist but their ideas are easily set aright by proofs from the universe. Upon knowing that God does exist, inevitably one will realize the debt he owes and will live accordingly.

This acceptance of the truth demands conformance of the will in that we must obey the laws of God and of His Church. This adaptation of the will to comply with the rules God and His Church have set forth necessitates physical strength. No weakling can manifest sufficient control over his will to show obedience to God's precepts.

A truly strong person can subject his will to God's. The conformance of the will to Divine Providence demands utmost confidence in Him. It is not easy to accept poverty, sickness, injury or death with a smiling face. Few do accept these as coming from an All-knowing, All-loving God. The loss of a beloved friend or relative is a tremendous and exacting test of one's ability to accept Divine Providence.

It is from one's compliance of his will to God's that he learns how to accept mortification. Mortification—subduing by severities. He must endure these severities if he desires strength. The will must be trained, it must be ruled by an iron hand, to yield unhesitatingly to such personal

exactness. Submission of the human will to God's shows the possession of true hardiness.

In the modern tongue, sissies are emotional. They are the ones who cry when upset, who show no sign of manliness—they can't take it. Is this one reason why the national defender said that religion is for a sissy? If so, he is wrong. Religion is not based on emotions. True, you may tell me that the pomp and ceremonies of the church are sense-appealing. The sight of Our Lord crucified is enough to bring anyone to his knees. Sense-appealing! I cannot deny this fact. But the emotions are not the basic foundation of our religion. We need not cry when confess our sins, nor must we become hysterical. True sorrow is of the will, not of the emotion!

However, religion does tend to raise our emotions to a new plane. The sense-appealing ceremonies bring them to a new level and have them grasping for a quality of emotion, comparable to God's. Consequently, our emotions are purified, resulting in greater bodily and spiritual vigor.

I have inquired into many a striking life to prove this thesis. These lives must be vivid and familiar to us. They are the lives of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John Baptist, Vianney—the Cure D'Ars, and an Irish laborer, Matt Talbott.

St. Francis of Assisi, the friend and patron of many today, was born into luxury. His parents indulged in the boy. Francis, in his late teens, was acknowledged the leader and master of wild parties which he and his fellow-men conducted. As a result he was acquainted with every form of license. Yet—Francis dared to denounce his pleasures and luxury. His father, enraged, ordered him beaten and imprisoned, attempted to bribe him; but Francis refused to revert his decision. That took *strength*!

St. Thomas Aquinas, now considered the world's most educated man, was at one time nicknamed "The Dumb Ox." Likewise, St. John Baptist Vianney, the Cure D'Ars, was noted for his inability to learn and comprehend. He became one of the greatest confessors the world has ever known. These men were not sissies. Hard work was their keyword. They had the determination and will power to work and work until they overcame their difficulties. They had *strength*!

A more modern example, one with which you are probably familiar, is the life of Matt Talbott, an Irish laborer. It is said that Matt lived in the gutters of Dublin because he was always too drunk to walk home. He began this dissipation at the age of 13 and continued until he was 27. At that time, someone refused to lend him sufficient money to buy liquor. His "pride" was so hurt that he pledged not to drink for three months. During this time, he began receiving the Sacraments and continued to

do so until his death. This must have taken great strength on Matt's part. Habits are hard to break—especially the habit of drink.

Matt Talbott was no sissy nor was St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas and innumerable others. Their later lives were ruled by strength—masterful strength over their bodies and minds. They had the power and will to subject themselves to their work for God—they were strong. These men must have repaid their debt to God. They were not *sisseys*.

My Brother And I

JOHN H. FORD

Deep in the heart of all men lies a cry for a great purpose in life. Here are two who sought to fulfill each his role of living. How each succeeded is the story Mr. Ford tells with simplicity and power. Mr. Ford chooses well the scene after death for then, if ever, man's thoughts are piercing and clear.

It was raining that memorable afternoon. It had been raining persistently since early morning. The heavy drops crashed to earth with a thunder, and the incessant din tensed my nervous mind and body. I remember well how I sat there alone in that spacious room that was dimly illuminated by a sickly colored light reflected from a cream papered ceiling, sat and viewed the gray plush casket at the opposite end of the room. A musty odor filled the parlor, and my nostrils were tormented by the perfume of those few designs scattered carelessly about the open coffin. For does it not always seem that the scent from even the most beautiful flowers sent to the dead oppress the spirits of those left behind? No, I shall never forget that afternoon. That rain, that light, that unearthly odor and his stone face. It seemed that day that death was alive in that room.

I stirred restlessly in my chair as I gazed upon the mask of his face that even then mocked me. In my heart I searched for sorrow and sympathy, but my soul could breathe forth nothing but hate shrouded by pity. Even as I cherished him in life, so it was in death.

As the rain continued its monotonous lullaby my thoughts thumbed back over the pages of time and for a moment I thought of the past

My brother and I even as boys found it difficult to harbor the same beliefs and ideals. Rarely, as the old saying goes, did we ever see anything eye to eye. It seemed to be an eternal strife. Simple conflicts then . . . but it was never any different. However, with this exception, I believe that my home life could be termed quite pleasant. He, my sister, my mother, father and I found some joy in life even though we couldn't boast of many luxuries. It was a scant happiness that we had—the only kind that those of our class could expect.

But then, before we children had even reached adolescence, my father was killed in an explosion at the mill. As he was not the kind of man who was thoughtful enough to have much insurance, my mother had to go to work. Now I often wonder how difficult it must have been for that aging woman to leave the sanctuary of her home and labor as a

chambermaid in a cheap hotel. Yet those years were hard on all of us. After all, I too suffered. It meant that even we who had so little had to give up more. Could you blame me for becoming ashamed or even resentful?

Somehow my sister and I managed to get through high school. But he was prompted by his delicate conscience to surrender his chance to fortify himself with at least a measure of education, and he went to work as a common laborer only after he had exaggerated his scant years. At the time I was amused at the selfish pride he took in bringing home his meager pay only to give it to my mother who was fooled by his intentions. But I wasn't. I rather believed that his reason for giving up school was a selfish one. You see, I was brighter than he and . . .

When my sister and I finally finished high school she was satisfied in taking a job in one of the local department stores, but I wished to continue my education. I wanted to become a doctor. I wanted to save lives. Then, too, I knew that doctors, at least the good ones, realized a considerable income and a comfortable security.

Well, knowing that my mother would understand, I went to her and told her of my sincere ambition. But I was wrong. She was difficult—not a bit understanding. However, she finally consented to help me after I had told her that since I was brought into this world, not of my own accord but of her's and father's, I should at least be given the opportunity to follow the vocation that I considered best. I explained that I had no special desire to be born, but since I was, I wanted to make this miserable existence as light as possible. Perhaps I was vicious in my plea, but it was my life . . .

It was several days later that my mother told me she would make every sacrifice to permit me to attend college and a school of medicine. Yet when she told me of her decision it was almost with a look of disappointment. I wonder if it was disappointment. I often wonder.

I attended school in a distant town but came home at every opportunity. It was during these stays that my brother and I became so bitter towards each other. He was eternally bringing up to me the fact that I had obligations at home and should let those come before what he called my own selfish desires. Always he spoke of duty. Those damned ideals of his. He irritated me so with them that I had to quit coming home on my vacations. It was a continual strife . . . and mother was still fooled by him.

I had not been home for three years and was in the last year at med school when my sister died. It was rather sudden, pneumonia. The family received me rather warmly. He was cordial and hospitable but indifferent. We spoke little, only when we had to. My mother was so overcome by the shock that she had to quit work.

I did not hear from home for several months after I was graduated

from med school. I was practicing as the protege of one of the most famous doctors in New York. I had only been there for a year when I received a letter from my brother asking me for money. He said that my mother was seriously ill and needed to spend some time in a sanatorium. At the time I sent what little money I could, but young doctors need so much when they are starting out. There is so much social responsibility, and one needs friends to gain practice.

The next word I heard from my former home was that my mother had died. It happened right in the midst of an experiment that my colleagues and I were conducting, but I left my work and journeyed home. My mother and brother had moved to a house at the other end of town from where we were raised. He welcomed me rather coldly, rather indifferently. He had aged considerably and his face seemed depressed. A dejected look, one that suggested that he had flown from reason, made but an inscrutable veil of his features. We did not have an opportunity to be alone until after the funeral. It was then that he told me that he wished to speak to me alone.

He was blunt and to the point in criticizing me that day. And for that I was at least thankful. At least he was not as dramatic and overbearing as usual. He told me that I had thought of myself all my life, that I was ungrateful, selfish. He thrust his sword deep when he told me that instead of saving lives I had broken hearts.

Usually I bore up under his reproaches, but that day I cursed him and challenged him. I asked what his uncalled-for self-denial, his aimless job, his satisfying kindness, his seeming devotion, had gotten him. I measured his accomplishments with my success. After I had finished he faced me with his cold gray eyes that offered his only defense. He walked away and out of my life.

As I sat there that day in the room with his soul's waste and thought of my success and his failure, I could not help but be proud. I knew, and he had known . . .

I was sitting there rather carelessly when I was startled by a lone figure that moved cautiously and suspiciously toward the corps. It was a woman. She seemed astounded as I approached her.

"Did you know him?" I asked.

"Yeah, I knew him," she answered and confronted me.

For a moment I just looked at her. I couldn't speak. Her pallid face was as set as marble. Deep lines emphasized her sunken eyes and colorless lips. This and a dejected look gave evidence that nature had collected her debt. Her eyes held me; my attention could not free itself. They were resentful eyes, wondering, full of tears. But she couldn't cry. Her frayed clothes, her almost neat stringy hair, her face that was little different from his, all gave evidence that she was a common prostitute. But those eyes! They seemed to be beacons of a victorious soul that had weathered a prolonged storm and reached a peaceful shore.

"Did you know him well?" I asked, not suspecting that even at his worst he would associate with this woman.

"Not the way you're thinkin'," she accused. "A woman like me don't ever get to meet any good guys, and I guess that ain't but right. But he was a good guy."

"How did you know him?" I inquired.

"That ain't any of your business."

"It's not really, I know, but you see, I'm his brother."

"Oh," she almost apologized, and evidently feeling that relationship gave me the right to know, continued, "It's a funny way that I knew him. But thank God I did."

"Well," she began, "you can just about see the sort I am . . . er . . . was. I ain't had many breaks in my time. Always it seems I been sorta kicked around. Never even as a kid did I ever have anyone to really care for me. Well, I was bitter, resentful, mad at the unjust world that seemed to demand everything and give nothin'. So I thought I fooled the world and tried to fool myself by using the same old gag, 'a girl hasta eat.' I went beyond the realm of the civilized world. I associated with and knew only brutes. I was one myself. In those years there was no time, no joys, no sadness, no reality, no truth. I was but a shell corrupted and long dead. But still I hoped. I hoped because there must have been a trace of life . . ."

It was still raining. We had not moved from the casket and I dared not interrupt.

"Well, one night a little over a year ago, I was down town just movin' from pillar to post. I hadn't eaten since early morning—didn't have much then. It was cold and damp that night. A sharp wind made everything but your insides cold. I guess I musta fainted. At any rate, I woke up in one of them public wards down at the city hospital. Your brother and some other fella was there and they started askin' a lot of nonsensical questions. I didn't pay any attention to them and they went away. But him, he came back the next day and the day after that. He didn't ask any more questions at the time, just acted like he understood. He came back for five days before he even asked me about myself. Well, he didn't look like such a bad guy so I told him the story that every woman like me has . . . but then I told him the real one.

"The day before I got out of the hospital—they said I had somethin' called malnutrition—he gave me some money. I got furious cause I felt that he was just nice to me so as he could make a pass. But he talked to me about myself. Told me lots of things about how I was wrong and makin' mistakes. He asked me to give it all up. Kept sayin' there was a better way. Even after all his kindness I had to laugh in his face for that. I thought he was just one of them reformers who ain't got guts enough to do what they want.

"But then he told me a story of a woman not much different than myself that had washed the feet of her Master with her tears and dried them with her hair. He showed me how she had found somethin' that every mortal seeks no matter what they are or were. He told me that she had found what I wanted and was afraid to seek. It got me thinkin'.

"I got a job. Been workin' in the same place now ever since. My room ain't so good and I ain't got many friends but I got somethin' more to look forward to than yesterdays. And I think I've found what he was talkin' about. And some day when I am like he is now, and I ain't afraid to be, I, too, will wash my Master's feet with my tears and dry them with my hair."

She finished her story just that abruptly. She turned away from me and looked back at him only for a moment; then she moved towards the register standing near the door and signed it. I bid her goodbye and watched her disappear down the dingy row of houses.

It was still raining. Rain can be so damned solemn at times. That day it seemed that even the sky was mourning.

I went back to talk to the undertaker, a big, ruddy-faced man, who was pondering over some ledgers when I entered his office. I made final arrangements for the funeral and explained that he would have to wait for his fee until the insurance was settled.

I came back into the parlor and found an old couple standing arm in arm beside the casket. From a distance I saw that they were no different from any old couple; humble, bent, simply dressed, they wore rather peaceful looks on their wrinkled faces.

"Yes, yes, we were very good friends of his," answered the old woman trying to smile.

They said a prayer, and then we walked over to the folding chairs that find place in every funeral parlor. We talked for some time. I learned that they too had a story.

It was the woman who told me rather shamefully. The old man just sat there, his head bowed. It seemed that they had lived in the same apartment with my brother and had known him for some years. In fact, ever since my mother had died.

As the old lady put it, it did not seem that they had grown old but rather just were old. Growing old is one of the most difficult chapters in the art of living, and they failed to write theirs with foresight. They had fought the world side by side and had made but common joy of joy and sorrow; yet they reached the winter of life without any resources. The old man lost his job and the little they did have was soon gone. Suddenly, stark reality faced them and they didn't know how to cope with it. They were faced with being put out of their home after they had been scourged by hunger. Yet even after such trials they were too proud to seek charity. Too proud to ask after they had given so much. You

see, they had raised three children. But they would not even approach their own for help.

I shall never forget her words: "We lost all sense of reasoning between heaven and earth. Our concepts became twisted and we found ourselves searching for peace in warkness."

So I learned that this couple who had written such a brilliant story were to make it a tragedy in the last chapter.

My brother found the couple overcome by gas in their small apartment. With the help of neighbors he revived them and learned what nobody in the neighborhood even expected.

"We were so ashamed," said the old man, raising his head for the first time. "We as cowards thought we were gallant."

They were bold enough to try the act again. But this time my brother talked to them for some time. He paid their rent, got the man a job as a nightwatchman at the same place he worked, then finally, contacted their children. The couple told me how wrong they knew they were and said they would do as he had told them: "Carry their crosses so that they could use them to span the last big gap." So their story . . .

We sat there for a time discussing quite extensively nothing in particular. Soon they left and again I was alone. It was then I wondered about the good he had done. But soon my mind was back to my own accomplishments. At that time, I was one of the most popular doctors in the city. I was at the peak of my profession and I was proud.

I was just putting on my top coat when the final guest arrived. It was a beautiful young woman that I encountered in the narrow hall right outside the parlor.

"Did you come to see my brother?" I asked.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, then looked at me closely after she had wrinkled her brow. Finally she smiled. "Don't you know who I am?"

I looked at her soft hair, her sparkling eyes as offending as a summer's sky, her complexion that was as harsh as a virgin snow, her smile as refreshing as a cool breeze.

"No," I answered; "I'm afraid I don't know who you are."

"I'm the little girl who lived next to you when you thought girls weren't good for anything but getting in the way of boys who wanted to be alone."

Then I remembered, and it brought back so much to me that I had forgotten. We both were strangers, but we had known each other so it did not take us long to become friends. We walked into the parlor and I stood back as she went over to look at him—for the last time.

"I owe him a lot," she said when she returned. "So terribly much," she whispered.

"And what did he do for you?" I asked with satire, not suspecting

that he could do anything for her as he had done for the others. I found myself amazed when she told me she too had a story . . .

"I always looked up to him," she said. "To me he always seemed an oracle. He was my secret love even when he became mad because I was in the way of your games. Even when I grew up I found him understanding and consoling when certain young men didn't ask me to proms or dances of importance. Then, I don't believe I loved him, I just believed in him. He was something different, something important in my life. At times, I suppose, he was bored with my simple troubles and complaints but always he listened quietly and then advised soberly. Rarely did I ever fail to need that advice and yet I knew he wasn't infallible. He couldn't have been because he was too much a part of the world.

"You no doubt remember the indescribable pleasure I found in taking part in those plays that the children of our neighborhood put on. It so happened that I never did outgrow that burning desire I had to be an actress. So my whole attention was devoted to that end, to lights, curtain calls, scripts, practice. And in due time I realized some distinction. But my fondest hopes came true when a movie producer consented to give me a trial after he had witnessed my ability in one of those wholesome summer theaters.

"I was given a screen test, and it turned out quite favorably; so I was promised stardom for my signature. I came back to reality and home from dreams and filmland to settle a few simple details before taking up residence in the country of magic. For the first time I didn't go to him. Why, I'll never know. But for the first time he came to me. We talked about everything but what we both were thinking and what we wanted to talk about. Finally, he asked to read my contract. He pondered over each part. When he did finish he just sat there for a moment . . . I felt I knew what he was thinking. You see, there were certain concessions I had to make in my social life—I had no private one. At the time I was worried because I knew about his ideals, his morals. I hoped that we wouldn't disagree at this our last talk. After all, I felt that I could easily take care of myself—and my soul.

"I expected him to reproach me for my intentions. He broke the silence with a question: 'What do you want or expect from life?'

"I remembered how my thoughts staggered around and I wasn't sure of just which one I wanted to come out. Then, with quite a little effort I stammered, 'happiness.'

"Then things were silent again. He just sat there and smiled. So calm, so collected, so unreasonably confident. Then he spoke in his usual calm voice.

"Perhaps," he said, "if you would have told me that you wanted success, and maybe you did want to tell me that, I would have had a

more difficult task; but now I consider it nearly simple. Somehow, I feel that I own a part of you because I have given you so much advice—or was it praise? Since you want happiness,” he continued, “I must tell you of something that I heard once about happiness, something that has given me my only happiness in life. Once a man said something to the effect that it was not how much we have, but how much we enjoy that makes us happy. Please,” he begged, “don’t even risk that precious soul I have been so interested in to obtain something that you can find within yourself now.”

A tear dropped off that young woman’s face when she recalled those words. Somewhere within me an emotion stirred. But she went on.

“Then,” she said, “he told me if it was success I wanted he would contend that maudlin applause of selfish audiences, a false life, the poverty of wealth were hardly indicative of true success.”

She told me that he concluded with, “If you are an artist you will be a success and a true success, for it will come from within your heart. But if you are not you wish to purchase fame in such a way as your contract demands I must say that you love but life. Certain ‘concessions’ will eventually demand that you relinquish everything you hold dear. You, my dear, must decide if you are a true artist.”

“I’m married now,” she told me, “and have a lovely son. I know now what he was talking about when he spoke of finding happiness. I feel like I possess the world and yet I love but two and but two love me.”

I walked with her to the register, then to the door. We talked about old times for a moment, then about me. I felt like saying so much about myself but I said so little. She walked out into the rain. It had not stopped.

After I had put on my coat, I walked to the register standing near the door. I did not want to see him again. I stood there for a moment gazing down at the last page whereon were four names. I signed my own, dropped the pen and then stared at the prized M. D. behind it. I wondered. Up from the depth of my soul came a doubt, the first one of its kind. The degree meant so little. And yet how could it mean anything beside a name that was beneath signatures of those four simple souls who had known a doctor greater than I

Thoughts In Autumn

JOHN GOETZ

If you think of autumn in terms of a warm glow such as that which steals over our bodies after a good week's work, you will be prepared to read Mr. Goetz's pleasant thoughts. There is nothing startling here, but neither is autumn.

To many, the transition of Nature into the autumnal season is a time of dereliction, a period of insufferable sadness—even of death. Certain of our poets and writers, especially, take this occasion to bewail deeply the approach of winter. Even now I have before me a poem singing of "Nature's Autumnal Decay." Nothing could be farther from the truth than this.

The year's decline is not a period of decay; it is a time of peace and rest, when the earth retires from its labor in bringing forth the fruitful crops of summertime. It seems to be weary of giving life, of having the nourishment drained from the soil by the greedy roots of growing things; so, for a while, it takes away life from the land, and all Nature settles into its wintry sleep. Vitality leaves the earth, only to return with full vigor at the approach of spring.

Surely, the year's final months should not be for us a time of sadness. Rather, they should be our escape from the listless lethargy and the maddening heat of summer. As the air cools, we are filled with new vitality and determination. Our daily tasks flow from us with increasing smoothness. We fill our lungs with the crisp, bracing air, and we are ready for anything. All the while that Nature is being devitalized, it seems, man is revitalized. His outlook on life is freshened, and he realizes that, however miserable his lot, things could be much worse. Autumn is the time for everyone to throw out his chest and be glad he is alive.

Not death, but lively activity, is the main theme throughout nature during this season. The furry creatures and the tenants of the woods may be seen busily gathering their food for the cold days to come. The migratory birds congregate into happy, chattering groups, craving companionship during the long journey southward. Trees draw their life-giving juices into the innermost heart of their trunks, to protect them from the approaching frost. As the season progresses, all these activities are rushed to completion before the advent of the snows. Far from being dead, the dwellers of the woods and fields are placed, as it were, on the defensive; they do not cease their striving until the chill rains of November—harbingers of winter—begin to fall over the land. They

initiate a time of indescribable peace, when Nature, seeing that her handiwork is good, lays herself down to well-earned rest.

Physicians often remark upon the therapeutic properties of fresh air. They must surely mean the clean, fresh air of autumn and early winter; none other can approach it as a stimulant for both mind and body. Surely, neither the chill, damp air of spring, nor the humid sluggishness of summer's heat can produce the mental and physical benefits which may be incurred by a brisk walk, short as it may be, on a fine fall day. And the thrilling, subtle odor which permeates this air like a fine incense! The rich spice of burning leaves; the faint, indescribable scent of frost—these make up an unforgettable combination which we should like to have linger the whole year through. No aroma on earth can quite duplicate it, and nothing else can give us quite the same pleasure and satisfaction which we derive from inhaling it.

Beauty, not decay and ugliness, is rampant throughout the land as winter approaches. The trees alone supply an inexhaustable variety of beautiful shades and tints. The red of the oak, the yellow of the elm, the other lusty colors of the woods, all seem infinitely more beautiful than the pale, sickly green of spring, and the monotonous lushness of the summer foliage. Even after the leaves are all lying beneath their trees, or are heaped in the hollows by the wind, we may see a surprising number of well-defined browns and tans in the stubble fields, woods and thickets. Against this background, nothing could be more thrilling than the green and gold flash of the pheasant, or the bobbing white beacon of the cotton-tail. This is true beauty, just as God created it—the beauty of Nature, undulled by the tampering of man.

So, why not let this autumn be for us a time of relief from the confusion of a speed-crazed world. Let us take more notice of the things God's creation has to offer, and pay less attention to the latest international crisis. It will pay surprising dividends in mental and physical refreshment. Begin to do this now and the results will soon become apparent.

National Defense And Diamonds

RICHARD J. ARTHUR

Stones and jewels are often forgotten items in the world of things. The connection with this vast and lumbering thing called Defense is not a scatterbrained thought. Curious perhaps it is, and unrealized, but it is a fact.

When Mr. Average American hears the word 'diamond', his mind immediately conjures up visions of glittering necklaces and sparkling bracelets. But Mr. Average American ignores 80% of the diamonds in the world when he does such a thing.

What he should picture to himself are mammoth monsters of machines which can devour huge chunks of metal, and can, with their sharp diamond teeth, produce pieces of every size, kind and description. These machines are used today by every manufacturer now engaged in the business of National Defense, and every machine depends for its operation entirely upon the cutting ability of diamonds. So important a role do diamonds play in our producing ability, that in the year 1940 \$300,000,000 worth of them were imported into the United States, no small amount, by any means.

The question now arises, where do all these diamonds come from? A student versed in geography would tell us that diamonds are obtained in two, and only two, places—South Africa and Brazil. Upon further query, he would admit that these stones are mined only in South Africa, and that diamonds obtained in Brazil are from alluvial deposits only. Thus, in reality, South Africa alone can be depended upon to furnish gems for the armament program. But can South Africa be depended upon? No, it cannot be. Great Britain is at war, and exports from Johannesburg, South Africa, have virtually ceased. Yet the English are not worried; they have built up a surplus of 500,000 carats—sufficient for their needs, perhaps, but not at all enough to furnish both England and the United States. In 1940 United States factories consumed 480,000 carats; this year the figure will be well over the half-million mark. It is clearly evident, therefore, that the United States will need diamonds soon, and will need them badly.

Where will they come from? Brazil? Hardly. Brazil does not export enough diamonds even to begin to supply the factories in America. Synthetic diamonds? No, synthetic diamonds have not yet proved practicable for use in the machines of America. Then where will they come from? Will some one just pull them out of a hat? Precisely. Some one has pulled them out of a hat, and officials in Washington are so

surprised that they still won't believe that right under their noses, in Pike County, Arkansas, there are diamonds waiting to be mined, diamonds better than any other in the world.

This little-known diamond mine has a long and stormy history. Although it has been in the hands of the Arkansas Diamond Corporation for many years, the only mining done was to a depth of eight feet. This may seem to indicate a lack of value in the mine, but such a supposition is entirely erroneous. Soon after the Arkansas Diamond Corporation was formed, the British Diamond Syndicate started underhand operations in this country. With clever stratagems, the board of directors was coerced to issue stock and more stock, until one million shares of stock were owned by several thousand stockholders.

A meeting of the stockholders was an impossibility, even by proxy. Therefore, when the directors were offered bribes by the British, they accepted. In return, all they had to do was retard mining operations. It will suffice to say that every man who was on the board of directors is today a millionaire. Why the stockholders failed to realize the reason for the lack of dividends will remain a mystery. That they did not, is an

indisputable fact. In the little while that the land was mined, diamonds taken from the mine were of such a quality that today some cost as high as \$50,000 apiece, and all were pronounced by Henry Ford to be 28 percent harder than any other gem in existence. Most of the stockholders knew this, and also knew that no dividends had been declared. Presumably, the British may also have bribed some of the stockholders, but evidence along this line is not forthcoming.

In 1937, an American who had been interested in the mine for many years began an attack upon the British-controlled board of directors. After four years of visiting stockholders and after spending well into the six-figure field, he obtained an option on the property. With no small amount of trouble, he finally succeeded in locating another American who was willing to put up the money necessary to buy the land. Together they successfully closed the deal and at once began to lay the ground-work for beginning operations.

Having secured the services of an engineer who is one of the most prominent, not only in this country, but throughout the world, both men soon received a copy of a survey made by him. In this survey were reports which startled them. Working twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, for thirty years will not even bring them near sea-level, but only to the high water mark of Pike County. Compare this with the depth of the South African mines—several thousand feet below sea level. While no positive figures can be given as to yield, it is computed that more than enough diamonds can be mined to satisfy the needs of this country.

At present, the North American Diamond Corporation, the new or-

ganization formed this year, is fighting for a government loan. Although the going is hard because of concerted attacks by pro-British officials of the Army, Navy, and OPM, it is hoped that within a very short time actual mining will be begun. When this is accomplished, America's National Defense program will no longer be dependent upon high-priced, unreliable British monopolies for diamonds; instead, it will be able to obtain American diamonds, mined by American workers, at American prices, for American National Defense.

I Went Through The Pen

THOMAS SCHEIBER

Mr. Tom Scheiber is the young brother of that staunch contributor to our journal of last year and before, Mr. Richard Scheiber. But Tom is winning his own writing laurels and begins with a solid, moving account of an experience that might benefit all.

It was the summer of the year 1936 that provided me with an experience that I shall never forget. It was an interesting and fascinating one, yet it instilled in me an impression that would make one seem somewhat depressed; adopt a pessimistic opinion of human nature, as it were, when recalling an incident of this kind to memory.

The occasion was a tour through the Ohio State Penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio. Because of certain restrictions of the penitentiary regarding visitors, it was necessary to have some influence among one or some of the officials in order to gain admittance to the grounds. My father and a friend, knowing the Catholic chaplain there, acquired this for us without any great difficulty.

As soon as we entered the offices we were cognizant of the disciplinary airs of this great penal institution: we were immediately searched by a pair of uniformed guards. We were then escorted through a large iron-barred gate, led down a long corridor, and were finally admitted through another immense door into the prison yard. There they were! Approximately 5,500 men were in the yard before us. Some, no doubt, had the minds of a genius, some were men of just ordinary intelligence, some were ignorant, and some were doubtlessly moronic. All were human derelicts, enemies of society and the state. There they were, enjoying an hour or two of recreation after dinner before going back to work or to school.

But were they really enjoying their recreation? Could they, behind those glum, gray walls, really get together and have a good time with the rest of the fellows? Maybe some of the more experienced and hardened inmates could, yes. But they were an extremely small minority. Most of them would find content in walking around with a partner and exchanging a remark now and then. Once in a while a forced smile would find its way to their lips, but it meant nothing. There was nothing to smile about; everything was utter seriousness. They realized their plight.

Perhaps most of them were contemplating their crime which sent them to this dread place, this hell on earth. Perhaps they were pondering how easy it would have been to follow the dictates of their conscience

rather than to have listened to the urgings and coaxings of accomplices, and as a consequence spend the rest of their life or a great portion of it behind the bars of a prison. Perhaps they were hating themselves for being so weak-willed as to be more afraid of the taunts and jeers of associates than they were of the arm of the law. Perhaps they were bringing back happy memories of the time when they could walk down the street with the gait of a happy, free citizen, instead of shuffling around a walled yard in the hated lock step, afraid even to raise their heads in their humiliation, for fear of seeing a person that they might have known before. Perhaps they were thinking of the happy times that they had had with wives and children, with brothers and sisters, with friends and sweethearts.

When they entered this place they ceased to be men; they immediately became numbers, to be known as such for many years to come. Even at the expiration of their prison term, these men might as well still be known as numbers, for they go wandering about with the indelible mark of a jail sentence seared for the rest of their lives on their heads, just as did the wicked Cain after he had slain his brother, Abel.

An example of this might be taken from the plight of a reformed and conscientious man released from prison. He goes forth a free man, a free man determined to face the world anew and endeavor to make a go of it by honest means. But just let him try to find a fairly decent, honest job. Yes, he's a free man, free to the extent that he is no longer bound by the rules of the pen, but he still is, and he always will be, bound by the fact that he is an ex-convict. His jail term will act as a permanent ball and chain. This fact will be taken into consideration by any potential employer. And so this man, despairing, wanders through the cities and often falls back into his former criminal tendencies.

There they are! Finally a bell rings and a jumbled mass of humanity slowly changes into neat rows of lock-stepping marchers. One row goes back to work in one shop; another row goes to another; a third row enters a classroom; and so on until in a few short minutes the prison yard, except for an occasional guard here and there, looks as if it had not been trespassed for days.

After being escorted about the yard by a guard, we entered one of the many machine shops. Inside were a group of men working intently over their machines, raising their heads only long enough to steal a secret glance at visitors who might chance through the shop. Throughout all the shops our welcome was the same: stealthy, piercing glances from the prisoners; cold remarks from stern-looking disciplinarians; a feeling, when we left the shop, that we weren't wanted there in the first place.

Completing our tour of the shops, we inspected the cell-blocks, the living quarters of the prisoners. They are nothing but barred cages, four tiers high and forty cells long, with four men to each cell. In each cell

building there are about five such blocks. On each cell door is a board on which is painted the names of the occupants of the cell, their religion, and whether or not they use tobacco.

We saw besides the cell blocks and the shops, the prison hospital, the Catholic and Protestant Chapels, the prison library, the huge kitchen, dentist's office, barber shop; all of which are taken care of or run by prison trustees.

Our last incidents at the prison were the ones which I shall never forget the condemned men in the death row, the short walk known as "the last mile," and finally the climax of this scene, the room behind the little green door; the room of death, in which is the electric chair.

There were several men in the death row when we went through, each one of whom was to walk the last mile and die in the electric chair. The sight of these men was something to behold; they knew that there was no hope for themselves; their days were numbered. They must pay with their lives for the lives that they so unmercifully took. Their perspiring, unshaven faces, streaked with despair, gave away their real feelings even in the face of a bold and defiant front. However, these men have one consolation in the fact that they are frequently visited and consoled by a chaplain; Catholic or Protestant, according to the prisoner's desires, who helps the doomed ones prepare their souls to meet the Almighty God.

At one end of the death row is a doorway which is the beginning of the "last mile." Not a mile by any manner of means, but a short walk from the prisoner's cell to the little room of death. Through this passageway with the man who is about to be electrocuted walk the chaplain, two guards and the warden.

As the little door at the end of the last mile was opened, the first object to reach our eyes was a crude wooden chair facing to the left. There is nothing elaborate about this room. At the front on a platform is the chair with its black and formidable looking braces and straps; in a small closet-like niche behind the chair are the executioner's switches and controls. Facing the chair are seats for officials, reporters, physicians, and other witnesses, and on the wall in front of the electric chair is a large electric clock with a long, sweeping red secondhand—the remote cause of the electric charge which sends the convict into eternity. Surrounding this clock are large banks of pictures, pictures of all those who have preceded in death the condemned man. What thoughts must race through the mind of him who is about to die! When he walks into the room, he sees the deadly chair and its electrodes which in a few short minutes will be placed over his head and around his leg; when he sees the reporters who will write in the morning editions all about how he died the night before; when he sees the doctors who in just a short while will bend over him and pronounce him dead; when he looks at the

pictures on the walls and sees the space where his picture will be placed alongside those who have died here previously; when he hears the warden's offer for a last request; when he steps into the chair and feels the executioner placing the straps about his arms, chest, legs and neck; when he hears the chaplain praying for the salvation of his soul; when he feels the cold electrodes being fastened to his head and to his legs; when he takes a last glance at the clock on the wall in front of him just before a little black mask is placed over his face; when he hears the executioner step to his switches and adjust certain controls before sending the charge of death through his body; what must a man in these staits think?

Only to have been strapped in the chair as I was, and even knowing that in a minute I would be released and be able to walk away from the scene produced a peculiar sensation in me. It made me feel how unimportant and small we human beings really are; how we would truly react if a sudden and violent death was imminent and inevitable.

We passed out of the little green room, again walked through the prison yard and through the barred gates and corridors, and finally out of the penitentiary grounds.

And so on a summer day in the year of 1936 ended an experience that I shall never be able to forget.

EDITORIAL

Jimmy—Light Shed On A Mystery?

STEVEN D. THEODOSIS

I couldn't understand it. Just three hours ago I had been reading his letter, and now, there in front of me was a telegram from my sister telling me that George, my brother, was killed in an automobile accident. Though lost in grief, I couldn't help hearing the many thoughts running through my mind, intriguing questions seeking a solution for his death.

As I reached into my pocket for my handkerchief, I came in contact with his letter. This I reread with trembling fingers and sobs that cut deep wounds which only time could heal. Reading it slowly, with admiration and tenderness, I smiled as he eloquently explained, in retaliation for a remark I had made to him in my last letter, how he could whip the daylights out of me, any day of the week and twice on Sundays, and then he told me about Jimmy.

Jimmy was George's age, full of life, but restless and always unsatisfied with his environment, unless it were rough or entailed some work with very little effort. George and Jimmy were good friends. Jimmy had been a problem child ever since he entered his teens. When he reached sixteen, which was the previous fall, he immediately quit school to roam the streets with an occasional job of a day or two in a grocery store. Here he became the chum of another lad who was exactly his type—undisciplined, haughty and reckless, and who was later to become his partner in crime.

In the past several years, Jimmy had been taken to the police station on various charges such as breaking bulbs under viaducts for target practice. Though one minor offense piled upon another and even though he was the hoodlum his "friends" knew him to be, he was still liked. He was liked because of his seemingly good nature and handsome features, yet behind him lurked Stevenson's immortal character, Mr. Hyde. One had to know Jimmy to see the Hyde in him. My brother saw it and always tried to make Jimmy understand the why of things, and tried to make him see things differently by doing good for him, such as fixing his car whenever it broke down, which was several times a week. At our house he behaved perfectly, but just as soon as he'd leave he'd head for trouble with seemingly the instinct that a bee heads for its hive.

It was about Jimmy that my brother concluded his letter, telling me that he was being held in an out-of-state jail for robbery. I sympathized but soon forgot Jimmy in my grief. Arriving home, I was surprised

to see Jimmy at the wake—a reformed Jimmy. He had been released after his mother had paid a fine, and all evidence pointed that my brother had finally been victorious in his effort with an indirect sacrifice.

We buried my brother, and during the next two weeks Jimmy never left the house. For several months nothing but good reports came about Jimmy. Then it happened. He had drifted back to his old lure of carefreeness and misadventure. He had run away from home and joined his father, who had been separated from his family for a number of years. His father, however, urged him to return to his mother, and in turn gave him and his two companions five dollars apiece to return home. They accepted the money and left with the pretense of following Jimmy's father's wish. That night, however, as the father went to work, Jimmy and his companions returned to loot the remainder of the money from its hiding place with which they had become familiar the same day.

Undoubtedly, they committed the crime thinking all the time that Jim's father would relinquish reporting him to the police. His father, on the contrary, had a state-wide search for him, and soon Jimmy and his friends were apprehended. Once again Jimmy was released by his mother, whom he had so often wronged but whose love he could never lose. His mother, poor as she was, shamefully but whole-heartedly borrowed money to gain his release, and Jimmy, in turn, promised he would never transgress again. To show his sincerity he even promised, with the aid of the probation officers, that he would pay back his mother every cent she borrowed for him.

Jimmy became part of society once more. For four months he was under the custody of a farmer for whom he was working in order to repay his mother. Again he seemed serious and law-abiding until it seemed that all fear of God was forgotten. Once again Jimmy was apprehended, this time as the leader of a gang held under a recent rape charge. Jimmy confessed to the charges and two weeks later was sentenced to twenty years in prison along with his companions.

At approximately the same time Jimmy's mother gave him birth, another mother who was later to be called "Mom" by George and me, was whispering a silent prayer which in all evidence to me seems to have been answered. Seventeen years ago, when my brother was born, my mother uttered a prayer to God that He give him the grace to grow into a fine Christian gentleman. She knew the ways of the world and she silently prayed, a prayer that she has continued to the present, that God take us from this earth prior to any disgrace that might befall us in the eyes of God and man.

In the light of the evidence given by Jimmy, have not her prayers been answered? Could not my brother have through innocent gestures taken part in any of those crimes which may have led to the final, destructable one? Could not he have been involved in a crime that would

have left his mother with a tormenting, bleeding heart for the rest of her life? Cannot one perceive the light shed on the mystery of his death? The accident in which his death occurred was one of the most fantastic. It occurred at an intersection in a residential district in which no accident had ever occurred before and one which the driver was well familiar with. The other three people involved in the accident, two who were in the car my brother was riding in, escaped injury without the slightest scratch whatsoever. Were my mother's prayers fulfilled? Is Jimmy the light shed on the mystery of his death?

Book Reviews

Christopher Columbus, by Daniel Sargent. The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 205 pp.

CLIFFORD RIEDE

Volumes have been written about Christopher Columbus, but none has been so eloquently described, so vividly written as this one by Daniel Sargent. In his previous writings Mr. Sargent has written about outstanding figures in the religious world; now he has chosen for his subject a well-known character in history. This time it was to be the discoverer of America, Christopher Columbus.

In this book the writer tells the life of this noted man from the date of his birth in 1451 to his tragic death in 1506. However, the author's work is not a mere collection of dull uninteresting facts and innumerable dates, it is a story about a man whose entire life was devoted to the sea, a man who defied the theologians of his time and finally carried out his dream of sailing west for a new route to the Indies.

At times the reader will live the life of Columbus. He will feel deep in himself the heartbreaks, the struggles, and disappointments of this man. There will be one particular instance when he will be able to visualize Columbus as a man of courage and determination. This moment occurs when Christopher and his men are half way across the ocean. Despite the practical mutiny of his men together with the hardships that he must endure, he boldly faces it all and proceeds to keep sailing off into the dreaded waters. Thus by placing his faith in God (as he had always done) and trust in his plans, he discovered the lands of the New World.

The book is written in such a way that it will prove ideal for the lover of history. Although at times it may prove to be rather technical, this technicality will be overlooked when one continues to delve into the interesting and stirring life of Columbus. Among the author's accomplishments there are times in the story when he has the ability of working the reader into a state of anxious anticipation. However, there might be a lull sometimes in the interest of the story, but this will not be for long because of the writer's changing mood.

With this gift of versatility Mr. Sargent has the talent of producing history in an interesting manner. He has woven into his narrative with its dates and circumstances a warm and deep appreciation for the eminent Columbus. A man such as Sargent deserves praise and acclimation for having written such an accurate and descriptive account of America's founder.

In conclusion, this reviewer would like to quote Father Joseph Hus-selin, S.J., and General Editor of the Science and Culture Series. In his review of the book he states: "It is the sublime closing of a great human drama, and nowhere has the author more triumphantly achieved his purpose to give us the real man."

Verses From the River Country, by G. R. Schreiber. Craw & Craw, Inc., Oxford, Indiana, 1941, 56 pp.

JAMES W. CHANNELL

Not just another book of verses about the river country, Mr. Schreiber's first volume of poems impresses the reader as though he, the reader himself, had lived on the river. The author, having come from the beautiful Ohio Valley, is well equipped to write such a book. But steamboats and floods are not his only interest; poems are found dealing with everything from birds to dusty roads.

As literature itself, Mr. Schreiber's works somewhat remind the reader of Mark Twain. Naturally, his writings and Mark Twain's would be alike in topic. Schreiber's verse reminds one of Twain, however, not only in topic but as well in style. Unlike Wordsworth, who considered poetry the reawakening in thought of a past emotion, the author rather conceives poetry as an expression of the emotion itself.

Wordsworth said: "She was a phantom of delight," then enumerates reasons why she was. Schreiber would have said, "She was a phantom of delight: and I was happy." He would not wait until his emotion had subsided to explain what had caused the feeling.

Like Twain, Schreiber's emotions must have been superficial. Deeper into his mind sink the dangers of a sand bar than into his emotions, the fear.

If a reader likes Twain, he will certainly enjoy Richard Schreiber. If he prefers Wordsworth and Keats, he may dislike most of Schreiber.

Mark Twain lives on, and if "Dick" gets the chance he, as Bill Bryant, a *New York Times* critic says in the forword, "like the river is going places."

France My Country, by Jacques Maritan. Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1941, 116 pp.

CHARLES SUDROVECH

"They are enduring many things which they know are not eternal. Immobile and voiceless in their dark night, they remain awake—and wait for the day of resurgence and liberty." To elicit the causes for the above stated plight, one does not accept as positive truth the findings

of "surface" reporters, but rather, one feels satisfied only in the acceptance of the discoveries of one who has dug deeply into the ruins of France's Democracy. It is for this reason that we follow so closely the explanations given by the very learned Jacques Maritain.

Though he be in love with his fellow-countrymen, nevertheless, being a bona fide philosopher, he does not allow his emotions to sway him from telling the truth. He presents the arguments, supplies the authentic data, and then draws sound conclusions. As Maritain explains: It is far better to know the reality, thus to have the groundwork for reconstruction, than to be wandering about in doubt and anxiety, thus becoming prey to enticing theories.

Those who follow reason and not emotion will be delighted in reading his fruitful reasoning. To give an illustration: Many have attributed as the decisive cause of France's downfall her degrading moral standard. To this Maritain replies: "It is utterly irrational to see in the sins of the French the direct and decisive reason for that defeat when the sins of their conquerors cry to heaven."

Since this work is done in his usual logical manner, it is definitely refreshing. In the role of an historian, aided by his highly developed philosophic mind, he fulfills the requirements so necessary to qualify him as an authentic historian.

As a convincing proof of the veracity of the writer, one needs only to look at the philosophy for which he stands—Aristotlianism. To the well-grounded philosophy student, this stands for truth. Now, surely, one believing in this maxim would not cast it aside and propound historical falsehoods, would one?

His style is as clear as crystal water—the words flow in a clearness not often surpassed by current writers. One notices, too, the wide variety of vocabulary employed—an evidence of versatility in language.

The theme of the work is, of course, the treatment of the causes of the downfall of France in relation to the part played by Politics and the People. After treating of these, he explains the Armistice, France in Defeat, and Through the Disaster.

In conclusion, I would recommend this book to Current History students since it affords a clear perspective to a somewhat complex affair in the history of mankind.

France On Berlin Time, by Thomas Kernan, New York; J. B. Lippincott Co., 1941, 312 pp.

FRANCIS L. KINNEY

Out of the confusion of speculations regarding France after June, 1940, Mr. Kernan brings forth an amazingly coherent view of the situa-

tion. Though he does not strive for complete objectivity it is not difficult to see that he has no axe to grind. His observations are keen and he backs up his thesis with substantial evidence.

The unique title is the keynote of the entire book. It is introduced in the first chapter wherein we see a Paris that rises on Berlin time, which is two hours earlier than the true time. The thought is clinched in the last words of the book: "Today the Frenchman sets his watch to Berlin time; but not his heart." This psychology is used throughout as if to arouse at least a spark of sympathy for the gay "Paree" that is no more.

Speaking of social conditions, there is no omission of the worst; instead a picture of internal rot and infection is portrayed as being typical of France. However, as to the righteousness and wrongfulness of these conditions, the reader is left to draw his own conclusions. The same may be said of the manner in which the position of the Catholics, Jews, Masons, and Royalists is analyzed. However, in this regard Mr. Kernan's non-committal attitude irks the reader, for he gives the impression that he is omitting details or opinions that might otherwise influence the presentation that he does give.

Treating the propaganda methods used by Germany towards France, Mr. Kernan entertains as well as enlightens us. The press, magazines, radio, movies, stage, and books of France have all been "reorganized" and seek to affect the Frenchman's attitude in five very definite ways—all dealt with superlatively. All possible angles are covered—the political, economical, and social. Out of the facts that are in themselves dull and incongruous to organized thought, Mr. Kernan develops a lively discussion, stitching in enough detail to prevent jargon.

A final word is given to America, an exhortation to arms. Somewhat dramatically, Mr. Kernan compares America to pre-occupied France and discovers parallel conditions. He declares that America's superiority complex must be broken down and that only unified forces can stop complete German domination. This is the only section where traces of pro-British propaganda appear. To prove this contention an analysis of the German attitude toward the world situation is flaunted.

Not only the prime importance of Mr. Kernan's survey of America makes it interesting but also his insight and suggestions that are presented in a style that is lucid and not over-technical.

Exchanges

FRANCIS L. KINNEY

From the preparatory seminary of Cathedral College, New York City, comes the first consideration for exchange comment. The subdued blue cover and golden print of their *Chimes* presents a magazine that is formal yet friendly in appearance. However, we must leaf through four pages of grotesque advertisements before arriving at the table of contents. In first place are two editorials, one dealing with Cathedral College moving from their old building on Madison Avenue to the new college campus; the second treating of "War and Peace." Both these editorials are well written. What the first lacks in general interest is compensated for in the cosmopolitan appeal of the second. The well-grounded thoughts contrasted in "War and Peace" are worthy of serious consideration.

Mr. Vincent Kenney with a forceful pen presents the first essay in *Chimes*, which he calls the "Lily of the King." Under this poetic title he attempts to explain why men will give up material success and pleasures to embrace Catholicity, which seems to give nothing but chains and restrictions. After reading this selection we cannot help feeling somewhat cheated; for all that Mr. Kenney states is well and good, but the point which he is striving to make did not strike home. His beauty of expression is undeniable, as well as are the careful preparation and research which his essay reveals. It is unfortunate that his material was not used to better advantage. The numerous examples of metaphor are to be emulated by other aspiring journalists.

Joyce Kilmer, the American Catholic poet, is the subject of the second essay. Bernard Corrigan, the author, seeks to disprove the opinion that Mr. Kilmer's death was untimely and to prove that his death was only the culmination, the fulfillment of a regular series of events. We are given a picture of Kilmer unlike any that we have seen before, that of a "hard military man seriously considering the acquisition of the habit of chewing tobacco." This bit of biography, combining humor with the grimness of war, makes us view the situation as Kilmer did. The witty quotations and keen insight into Kilmer's poetry all add up to a total of an intensely interesting estimate.

Perhaps the *Chimes* is not accustomed to receiving brilliant short stories; otherwise the build-up which the editor gives "Valiant Are the Fled" is not justified. The story concerns two soldiers who in civilian life were competitors for the championship in the Olympic half-mile. They never met, and the race was never run, for war intervened. Now both lie with maimed legs on a field that is the aftermath of a great battle. In order that his competitor can die happily the American youth

tells the German youth that the race has been run and the German is the winner. There is nothing to recommend this story unless it be its gruesome details and harsh realism. It is a thriller but nothing more.

The biography of Heinrich Bruening is treated by John Lyons in "Man of Iron." This lengthy article discourages the reader by bringing in needless detail that has no special effect. For a term paper in contemporary history this sort of research would be splendid, but to be included in a college literary magazine should have been the farthest thought from the author's mind. It lacks vigor, and hence it is with a sense of real drudgery that one can finish it. *Chimes* should include this in a history journal.

Much more successful as a short story than the previous one reviewed is "Lethe's Weed" by John Steltz. This story has definitely a new angle, and the reader is naturally intrigued by that fact alone. Death is an experience that will be common to all men; Mr. Steltz used this knowledge in order to attract interest before he gives us the thoughts of a man who lies dying and the scenes that surround his death. Although the theme is morbid, the events that are narrated do not cause horror. A haze of mist seems silently to surround one as he reads; he can easily hear the soft sobs of the mother contrasted with the rasping voice of the mad son.

"Victory in Retreat" is a study of the abilities of Winston Churchill by Alexander Banyo. This is a mere orderly arrangement of a conglomeration of facts regarding Mr. Churchill and his accomplishments. The appearance of this review is timely enough but out of place in a literary publication. Instead of escaping for an hour from the hum-drum of the world today we are thrown into the midst of its greatest problems by this tale of what the great Mr. Churchill is doing and will do for dear old England. The daily newspapers and radio reports will take care of these matters very well.

A sincere analysis of the reasons why we have war today is seen in "Falling Fire to Tend." The content reveals nothing new, but the simple direct style of the author, Frederick Kelly, instills a greater realization of the viciousness that God must punish. Mr. Kelly issues the call to America to awake and "announce to Germany the tiding of resurrection and new life with faith and hope."

Another rehashing of old material is seen in Benedict Koult's "That They May Be One." This article explains that the Mystical Body enables the Church to combat and refute all heresies, for all the heretics themselves are of its members. Mr. Koult does state that the world is realizing daily that by being cut off from the lifegiving vine of Christ it is crumbling. The picture seems, on the whole, too ideal for us today.

The remainder of this edition is devoted to the departments common to most college literary magazines. *Chimes* conducts an exchange department much similar to this one, and the evaluations made by the editors

there show close discrimination. No attempt to spare an erring journalist is made and, as a result, we must criticize the sarcasm and subtle remarks that are all too frequent. The humor department is excellent, unless it presents too much of a contrast to the decorum of the rest of the magazine.

Aurora, from a fellow Indiana college, St. Mary of the Woods, Terre Haute, is one of the most attractive magazines that has found its way into *Measure's* files. The issue of June, 1941, is not an exception to this general rule. The first work that greets the reader as he eagerly looks further is a poem by Mary Virginia Boros, which she has called "The Wanderlust." Miss Boros' poetry has long been one of the bright spots of the *Aurora*, and this bit of verse is about the only outstanding selection in this issue.

Following are four essays that are winners of the Freshman Essay Contest at St. Mary's. Ah, here we are bitterly disappointed, for instead of some masterly pen-strokes all that can be found is blurb. Miss Patricia Villareal's essay on "Strange People" is the only one that is worthy of print in any college publication. It can be recommended for the wit and humor that Miss Villareal has managed to squeeze into it. The essays on "Diets," "I Am a Bookworm," and "Just Give Me a Subject" are childish and too whimsical for what we would expect from college youth.

Under the title of "Millions For Defense" Helen Patterson livens the *Aurora* for the extensive time of twelve lines. This smattering of wit could be developed into a striking essay, but Miss Patterson bothers just long enough to tease the reader.

Discussing the pros and cons of the word "next," Miss Mary K. Baty delivers material that has promise of greater things to come as her style matures. This familiar essay is too short to merit praise, for we feel that Miss Baty stopped before she started—in other words, she failed to exhaust the possibilities of her subject by far. The same criticism can be given regarding "Jagged Pieces" by Barbara Bruchman. This essay is the only one in the issue that turns aside from trivialities and digs deeper into the realm of thought.

Three pages of "side-glances" break the succession of essays and give your editor an opportunity to say something in favor of the *Aurora*. These minute sketches are filled with spice and serve to refresh after evaluating the foregoing articles. The insertion of such a section in any literary magazine varies the makeup, which is all so essential for real value. The *Aurora* combines local, national, and general news into this one department and does so in a pleasingly coherent manner.

The departments in this magazine are average, but still the exchange-department idea seems to have been neglected by the young ladies of St. Mary of the Woods. Surely they cherish the wish to help other Catholic college journalists as well as themselves.